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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN SANTA ROSA COUNTY ADDRESSES COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS



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Milton, Fla. —The Florida Department of Health in Santa Rosa County recognizes the value in measuring health outcomes and today acknowledged the 2019 County Health Rankings & Roadmaps tool released by the University of Wisconsin and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. This study highlights the many community factors that influence health and uses established data, much of which is available from the department at www.FLHealthCHARTS.com.

“The County Health Rankings are a useful tool in developing our three-year community health improvement plan,” said Sandra L. Park-O’Hara, APRN, administrator of the Florida Department of Health in Santa Rosa County (DOH-Santa Rosa). “We did well again this year, and we are pleased with the progress we are making, but there are still opportunities for improvement, and we are going to continue to work with our community partners on those issues that have an impact on quality of life, particularly access to care and substance abuse. Those were two important issues identified in our Community Health Needs Assessment.”

These rankings are a snapshot of the health of counties across the country, and they emphasize that health is not a singular effort but a combined work in progress across all community partners. The department works in collaboration with local governments, non-profit organizations, health care facilities, business groups, schools, faith-based organizations and many other stakeholders to improve the health of all people in Santa Rosa County. These rankings use data related to physical environments, social and economic factors, health behaviors and clinical care.

In Santa Rosa County, the [Community Health Improvement Plan \(CHIP\)](#) is designed to address specific opportunities for improved health that have been identified by the community. The department has partnered with many stakeholders to implement the CHIP and collaborates regularly to track progress.

One important area of focus continues to be healthy weight. In Santa Rosa County, the National Diabetes Prevention Program (NDPP), a very successful evidence based program promoting healthy lifestyle choices endorsed by the Centers for Disease Control, is working to reduce the rate of Type 2 diabetes in adults by reducing the rate of obesity through health education and peer support.

In an ongoing effort to decrease the county’s adult smoking rate, DOH-Santa Rosa partners with the Area Health Education Center (AHEC) to offer free smoking cessation classes. As of

January 2019, efforts to decrease exposure to secondhand smoke have resulted in the adoption of smoke free policies by 24 businesses throughout the county.

“Change doesn’t happen overnight; it takes work and the efforts of strong community partnerships. We are fortunate to have those strong partnerships and look forward to continuing to make strides toward making Santa Rosa the healthiest county in the state in which to live, work, learn and play,” said Donna Tucker, president and CEO of the Santa Rosa County Chamber of Commerce.

“We were pleased to see that Santa Rosa had done so well in the rankings, but there is more to be done. One of the issues we plan to focus on in the next community health improvement cycle is Access to Care, particularly as it relates to mental and behavioral health,” said Phyllis Gonzalez, community partner liaison with Circuit One of the Department of Children and Families. “We have a very dedicated group of people working to address the problem and we expect to see improvement in that area going forward.”

To explore more health indicators in your county, visit www.FLHealthCHARTS.com.

About the Florida Department of Health

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